Start of Max Mack Collection

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455
SPEEDWELL 1990.

9th March 1972

Dear Charles + Lois.

We were very pleased to receive your letter of Jan. last + Marie is delighted to know that you both + all your children are getting on so well with their different activities. In his old age he is very happy to know that the next generation is on the way to achieve a secure future for themselves under the most clever guidance of Lois + Charles. We are very much impressed by the detailed discription of their development + we are always interested to hear all news of all members of the family. Rudolph Kurtz (a writer of a good reputation) wrote the enclosed chapter in a book which he wrote before he died. Marie feels after he received your long letter, he has to tell you something about himself. The widow of

Rudi Rudolph Kurtz sent Maxie all the material that
his husband wrote about his life. Now the book
was published + is now in the Library of the
British Museum for all who do research on
specially on German films, about the beginning
of the art created by Maxie of the German Films
The work of Rudolph Kurtz, of which Maxie is very
proud, will definitely impress the future generation
as an important factor of their own past.
Maxie is convinced, in all humility, that his
~~for~~ life has been most interesting + productive
+ hopes it will not be forgotten.
Maxie would like to convey to Lola his love +
admiration of her kindness + generosity.
In conclusion there is nothing for him to say
but to wish you all good health + happiness,
of course including Lola.
Heartily, Our love to you all.

Alice + Co

P.S.
I have written this letter at Maxie's dictation.
Love to all Anita

B E R L I N -

The Film City and

M A X M A C K

by

R U D O L F K U R T Z

(A Chapter from his unfinished
book: "Berlin and the Film")

Now I've to tell you how one can fall headlong into ones Fate. It happened in three minutes.

The year, 1912. I had been sitting in the Reading-Room of the National Library. It was an early afternoon in the month of July, extremely hot; one became visibly more and more tired. In front of me lay the old dusty, fusty trash "De jure gentium" by an out-of-date professor of the equally out-of-date university, Frankfurt a.O. I had been reading here for two years. Rising in disgust, I threw the old parchment-covered volume aside. I had had quite enough of this relic of the past.

In a street close to the library was a well-known cafe. Somebody called my name. Before a shop-window stood a young man, who cheerfully made signs to me. Spontaneously, there flashed on my mind a theatre established in a cold hall, decorated with garlands, and with an half empty stage. That was ten years ago. A young man, my good friend, played a deaf musician delightfully and with success. That was the same young man - Max Mack. I was indeed delighted to meet him again.

The memory of many unforgettable days ran quickly through my mind. We shook hands most amicably, exchanged the usual phrases; then he asked me:

"Where are you going?"

"To that cafe over there", I said, "to spend my earthly fortune on coffee and cakes." (That meant one and a half hour's walk home for me.)

"Have you already had your lunch?"

"That is just what I said."

"Nonsense! You come with me. I invite you."

He said it in such a free, such a friendly way, that I could not refuse. Then I was flabberghasted to see how the young man walked over with me to a golden shining, copper-plated auto and called out to the chauffeur:

"To Kempinski."

I was still speechless. Then in a shy voice;

"May I ask what your business is?"

"I am a Film director."

"And the auto?"

"That is the beginning of my occupation."

It happened at Kempinski. I didn't wear my heart on my sleeve; then - suddenly he asked me:

"Do you know something about the films?"

I answered a little hesitantly:

"Not very much."

"That doesn't matter... you come with me."

I understood exactly what it meant. One glance backwards, one glance forwards. Then I burned my boats and went with him willingly.

Half an hour later, I was in the office of Mr. Jules Greenbaum, the boss of the 'Vitascope.' He looked at me suspiciously, he looked at Mack apprehensively, and after exchanging some words with him in an undertone I did not hear, shook hands with me. When I went home, I had in my pocket a contract as P.R.O. and Dramaturg. (I believe I was the first P.R.O. in German Films). For the next twenty years my fate was sealed.

But the career of the young Mack, until that day when he led me towards his car, had not been an easy road for him. He talked about it in a most interesting manner, with the good humour of a man, who is, so to speak, 'out of the wood.'

"If you want to be in a race," he said to me, enjoying a Havana cigar, "you have to be right in front. To sit forever and a day in a cafe, where so many out-of-work actors are waiting and waiting for the chance to be picked up for a small part by an assistant of a film-producer, was not my idea of getting on in life. If you want to keep your head above water, you have to swim. But how? I talked to all the influential men of the film business. All my offers were refused. They didn't need anything; they had everything already; nowhere was there a vacancy for me. Nevertheless, I found out at last, that there was something missing though they wouldn't admit it."

"Everything in the 'glass-house' was ready to start filming, except they didn't know what to film with. In point of fact, they fell short of ideas. Dont let us talk about a film-scenario. Nobody those days knew what it meant. But they were in need of something that looked like a story.

"This was an irresistible op ortunity to take my chance. I sat down and wrote and wrote, literally speaking, all that was left in my memory of the good and bad novels. Three, four pages, nobody wanted more, but the film-men insisted on having 'a pitchor filled to overflowing with tears.' You know that melodramatic stuff like 'The Grass-bank at the Parent's Grave.' (Now I can't abstain from making a marginal note. All this was fifty years ago.)

"In all my years I have not used so many authors - poisoners of spring-water, benefactors of mankind - as I brought together in those days on only three handwritten pages.

"But... I came off well. It was exactly, so to speak, what hit the nail on the head.

I received 'feed - fifteen to twenty-five marks. In those days of mine, what a day that was!

"L'appetit vient en mangeant." Certainly, it looked as if I had made, to a certain extent, my way in the film-world, and consequently I got tired of ante-rooms, director's assistants and secretaries. My ambition was to be a film-director myself; the trouble was that there were many others with the same idea.

2.

"For a very long time I have produced films for the 'Vitascope.' I have been my own leading-actor, director, scriptwriter and manager for every single production. But it was not as simple as it sounds now.

"You would like to know what kind of films I produced about 1910. Let me mention only two, which aroused in those days, incomparable enthusiasm from all the owners of the film-theatres. The general public apparently liked them too.

"One was called 'The Mother's Eyes'. - In short, the father married again and the climax showed how the child ran through a violent snow-storm to the cemetery, and spread a great bedcover on the grave, in order that her dear, dear mother did not freeze. Yes, it was like that.

"The other was called 'The Trap.' - The suspicious husband pretended to go on a business trip. But actually he disguised himself as a Japanese, with oblique eyes, thin moustache, black periwig and - returned. Small wonder that, in his elegant disguise, he was received by the coquettish lady of the house with a certain kind of welcome, which indeed justified the husband's suspicions. And in the climax, the make-up was wiped away, moustache and wig were thrown down, and, in a dramatic gesture, he said, " Ha, you wretched woman, leave my house at once." In a fit of anger he turned her out. The running time of

this film was not more than fifteen minutes.

"It went on like this for a long time. Although, as always, the businessmen were moaning and groaning, the business by itself was an exceedingly good one, which, naturally, created an atmosphere of complacency.

"But, much as the old feeling of comfort could be considered safe, in this, as it were, commercial enterprise, there was also somewhere a restlessness, an inextinguishable desire like an embryo, almost gold-digging fever, which incited film-people to look for pastures new. It was and always will be the same. The Film has its own dynamics.

"Naturally, it never happened that a gifted young human being could put forward the hands of the world's clock more rapidly than usual. Even if he possessed the philosopher's stone, if the world is not ready to accept his advanced ideas, nobody takes any notice of him. But we are not talking now of things related to universal history. We talk here of an important progressive movement of German Films. A lot of people talked about new possibilities, but there was one who did not talk. He did something. And now we are back to Max Jacob.

In the year 1911, a young, unknown actor succeeded in carrying out a scheme, which looked an impossibility. He managed to convince the ingenious Jules Greenbaum, owner of Vitascope Film Ltd, once a variety artist, who played card-tricks, and then got on in the world and became an international Film-producer, - yes, he convinced him - that in order to attract greater attention from the general public, one must set oneself a higher standard in the production of films.

And this remarkable young man achieved something else, which took all showbusiness people (Film and Stage) by surprise. He induced the greatest German actor, Albert Bassermann, to act a part in a film.

I don't think one can understand now what it meant in those days. To form the right idea of this achievement, you have only to imagine that somebody had successfully persuaded, the world-famous mathematician, Professor Albert Einstein, to make his appearance as an Arithmetician on the Music Hall stage. In those days, every actor or writer of reputation looked down at the Cinema-theatre as an immature, second-rate place of entertainment, and they considered it beneath their dignity to work with this innovation.

I would like to add - (it might be worth mentioning) - that the film-studios in which Mack had to work so far, had been in a most primitive condition compared with the studios of today. There was no such thing as architecture. To give his future films a more artistic background, he engaged famous stage designers to design and to build the scenery in the studio. Artists like Ernst Stern, Ludwig Kainer, Paul Leni and others, became collaborators in his production. Mack understands the great art of learning quickly and successfully. In an American Film he saw how one works with 'effects.' Part of the set was in full light, while the other was kept in semi-darkness. "What they can do over there," he said, "we could do here." So, special effect lighting and spotlights became, so to speak, daily bread. Mack was also called a pioneer of the great 'close-up'. But that is still a debatable point.

Let us go now to Vienna. Mack was invited to appear personally to introduce with a speech, his latest 'creations', in which he played the leading parts. He was received by the Press most cordially; and in their typical Viennese amiability, they praised Mack as the Bassermann of the film. He heard this theme in many variations. Although it fed his ego, it did not turn his head. But the sound of this great compliment lingered on in his ear. The real Bassermann in films must be the sensation of all sensations.

"As I returned to Berlin," said Mark, " I took an oath never to

be shaved again until I had Bassermann before my camera." After a short pause he continued: "I didn't have the slightest illusion that Albert Bassermann, who never on any account, allowed himself to be photographed, who through a highly developed private code, separated himself from his fellow-men, would straight away and willingly agree to be filmed. So, a strategic plan had to be laid." There was, at that time, in Berlin a sensational stage-success: 'The Other One' ('Der Andere') - a new, original version of the fantastic dual-role of the reliable, trustworthy Dr. Jekyll and obscure criminal Mr. Hyde. Author: the well-beloved, renowned Paul Lindau. Lindau was not affected with artistic prejudice and in spite of his age, he was always susceptible to new, adventurous ideas. Besides he had a distinct liking for cash down. But the money had to be found.

Mack confessed that he can't remember any more how he overcame his chief's reluctance to provide the money. He went on talking like a babling brook, of the greatest scheme so far, of the incredible sensation and of the enormous, artistic achievement in the world of entertainment..... One day he weakened and gave in, not without later telling me what a fool he had been.

"I remember very well all the details of the interview I had with Paul Lindau," Mack told me, "it was after all the beginning of my career." Be that as it may, it demonstrates exactly the manner of thinking among writers of reputation and of film-people between the years 1910 and 1911. "As for me as matters stood, believe me, it was certainly not a bed of roses. The reception was not very encouraging. 'A Film Director! What does that really mean?," he asked me.

"I explained I was just a showman, who saw the invention of the Cinema as a new, popular form of entertainment. And when I put forward my request, he looked at me half whimsically and half curiously: 'Please Mr. Mack, will you explain yourself more clearly.'

"I intend to acquire the film rights of your play, "The other one."
"For what purpose?" The grey curly-headed author seemed to be taken by surprise.
"I will reproduce your play for the Cinema, and you, Mr. Lindau will become world-famous."
He laughed heartily: "You must tell me more about it. Until now I only know that my nephews sometimes go secretly to the cinema."
Needless to say, I talked and talked with all the persuasive eloquence in my power until he allowed himself to be convinced by my reasoning.
He asked me finally:"Have you ever heard of a professional writer having anything to do with films?"
"No,"I said simply, "but someone has to be the first." And I discreetly toyed with the cheque in my hand.
"And who do you think should play the leading part?" I saw that he was at last showing a slight interest.
"Albert Bassermann," I said it as if it had just come to me on the spur of the moment.
He whisked off his pince-nez and looked at me with eyes nearly starting out of his face.
"Do you know Bassermann, young man?"
"No."
"Now I understand everything. I believe we have nothing more to say to eachother."
On the contrary. As it turned out we had much more to say to eachother. And as I left him, he had the cheque on his desk and an interview with Albert Bassermann had been arranged.

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Bassermann. The name was like another world in the midst of Berlin. Everybody knew he was the greatest German actor but nothing more was known about him. Often enough one could see in newspapers and periodicals pictures of well-known actors; as occasion offered they gave interviews; again and again they showed

their faces at all kinds of festivities. But Albert Bassermann? His private life was very reserved and uncommunicative. He lived more or less in seclusion. So much so that even the most ardent reporter had to give up the attempt to interview him. So it did not seem very promising to talk to him about Films.

But it was just because of his determination to keep aloof from all publicity that admiration for him was so firmly fixed in the hearts of the people. When, in 1953, he was once again in Berlin and visited the Schiller Theatre after a long exile, something happened that I have seen only once in my lifetime. The octogenarian was just about to take his seat when he was recognised and the whole audience silently stood up. The seats clattered; then there was complete silence in the house. Embarrassed and overwhelmed Albert Bassermann made a slight bow- and sat down.

Mack continued with his story:

It started with a formal invitation to an evening meal. And when I stood in front of Bassermann's villa, I felt my heart palpitating. Would I be successful? A charming smile... some pleasing words... shaking hands... and the ice was broken. He led me into a kind of wintergarden... a cognac... a cigarette... it was like it is in a light society play. A man of the world... a perfect conversationalist. The conversation turned to a play which I had not seen, a book which I had not read, a symphony I had not heard and to things in general, but not a single word was mentioned about films.

In the dining-room the meal was served in a formal way, but it was excellent. So was the French salad-dressing which he prepared on the table with a big wooden spoon and wooden fork in a crystal bowl. The wine of a good vintage was excellent. But all along I was thinking of time passing without a single word being mentioned about the real object of my visit. At last, as the coffee was being served, he asked rather suddenly, "Do you think I am suitable for the film?"

"Certainly you are? I know it."
"And how do you propose to work with me?"
"Quite simply, you play as you always play, and I will see if it is right for the film."
"Ah! You mean to say that there is a difference between stage and film acting?"
"Only a very little one."
"But, I suppose, you understand that I can only play a part as I see it."
"That is just what we are expecting from you."
"Ha! And what will be the next step?"
"I would like to propose you visit me in our studio. We will make a little test. You play any scene you like, just to see the photographic effect. I am so convinced, (I continued) that this new ingenious invention is the best medium to bring to the masses of this world of ours, a high standard of entertainment produced with the help of our renowned writers and actors of reputation."
In the film-studio, a big audience were assembled. Everybody who was somebody in the German filmland was there, in order not to miss the great sensation of seeing Germany's most distinguished actor in a film-studio. When Bassermann entered, everybody applauded. - A little imperceptible bow.
"What shall I play Mr. Mack?"
The papers were just fill of his triumphant success as 'Othello' in the Deutsches Theater.
"Play, if you please, a scene from 'Othello', and after that I have one favour to beg of you."
(And that, in the widest meaning of the word, was my stratagem.)
"Very well."
Everybody in the studio retreated to the background. The lights flashed on. The cameraman stood behind his apparatus - - - - -

- - and Bassermann was thrilling, even in this fantastic atelier-room, which looke like an empty market-hall. The scene finished - everybody applauded, and again a little bow.

"And what was your wish, Mr. Mack?"

"Yes, a very important one," I told him.

Without much ado, I asked all the people in the studio to leave, as I wished to talk to Mr. Bassermann alone. It was certainly not an occasion to witness the first instruction of film-acting for the greatest German actor. Not without a reluctant murmur, everybody left the studio. Only the cameraman and the electricians stayed behind.

"And now my request. You have played magnificently - for the stage. Let us try now the same again for the film as I see it. Please, Mr. Bassermann, give me, give yourself, a chance."

He looked at me a little dubiously. He gently rubbed his temples as though to banish any false impressions and then said with a charming smile: "I will lose no time in complying with your request."

Together we went through the text. More than half was given up as inoperative for the screen. Word by word was under consideration. Everything that was so wonderful on the stage, the movement of the hands, the great gestures and so on - would make the film restless. The words must not be spoken, they must become visible. - A picture. Partly I explained, partly I played before him. With slight shrugs of the shoulder as though to make light of his willing mind, - he confessed that he was still puzzled. But a disciplined actor follows his director, and gradually he came round to 'my being in charge'. He was visibly interested. Again and again he rehearsed, until we gave the scene the final touch. And then the lights flashed on - the film started. When he said good-bye, he shook my cordially by the hand:

"It was most interesting, Mr. Mack."

The very evening Bassermann was punctually in the studio. We were sitting alone in the projection room. Light extinguished, the film rolled up..... As the light flamed up again, there was, sitting beside me, a perplexed man. And then with a little toss of his head, he said to me:

"I am indeed disappointed. That - that you mustn't show to anybody. Please forgive me that I gave you so much trouble - that is, sorry to say impossible."

"Yes", I said, "I agree it is no good. But we have a second film, Mr. Bassermann. I suggest we look at the second scene now."

(Needless to say, I had seen it before he came.)

He hesitated. I could see he was in a state of uncertainty. But he stayed on. The film rolled up. When the light went on again, I heard an entirely changed voice talking to me:

"Can I see this scene again." The film rolled up.

"Do you like it?"

"I have only one word - magnificent."

"You really mean it, Mr. Mack? I, myself, think it is quite interesting. Whenever you like, I'll do my utmost to make a success of it."

A load was lifted from my mind.

So, the first German author film with the greatest German actor was on its way. A turning point in the history of German films.

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Really, this film attracted the attention of a new type of filmgoer. For the sake of an illustration here is part of a conversation on the terrace of the old Cafe Josty at the Potsdamer Square. Newspapers were lying over the stony balustrade and all over the place. Hats were hanging on the chairs; blue smoke of pipes and cigarettes.

Every kind of language is heard. A place of meeting for the international journalists, occasionally also a couple of Germans. The topic of conversation was prominently the Bassermann film. At my side sat a most active journalist, not an important, not even a well-known one, but he had a nose for 'news'. You could see him at any hour, at any place, where something had happened. He also busied himself in sending to more than a dozen newspapers in the provinces, every available item of news. Therefore, I noted down our talk as a documentary reflection of public opinion. "About a film! With Bassermann! So what! Do you really think that is a sensation? Six lines and not more!" But then what happened? The telephone rings. Urgent calls from various towns - Cologne, Dresden, Rostock, Breslau, Dusseldorf etc. - all of them asking urgently for news about the Bassermann film. That is Berlin! When a stone falls down from the roof of a house, that sounds in Kattowitz like an earthquake. "Alright then, I have seen the film, the first in my life. I didn't like it. They talk and talk, and I didn't hear a word. One gets a buzzing in the ears from it, when one has to speak inside oneself every word one doesn't hear. Then to fulfil my duty as a correspondent, I went to see the film again. Well - and then I reported - quite positive."

"And what about that buzzing in your ear?"

"In our job, we have to put up with a lot of things. You must not think that the sensation impressed me - sensation is, with me, part and parcel of my metier. No, it was the audience! Not the general playgoer, who goes to the theatre either out of curiosity or snobbishness. No, the people of the street. I can't get rid of the feeling, that the film talks their own language, although they don't hear a word. And there, by jove, I see possibilities."

"Say exactly what you mean?"

"I talk quite intelligibly. I have been informed, that the film apart from turning over a new leaf is also an enormous business success. And I know the moneyed people. Give them an inch, and they will take a yard. There comes a man like Mack who has many great ideas in his head - and then it turns out that his ideas are not just flights of his fancy, they are - money, money! Nothing could stop him anymore, even if he did ask for the Man in the Moon. Nobody can teach me anything about Berlin. The people of Berlin are passionately inclined to take risks and make at the same time, light of it. Quite often it fills their pockets. And that, my friend, I can tell you; whatever gets the ball rolling in Berlin, it will run its course to the end. Today, it is Bassermann; tomorrow, they send for Max Reinhardt, and the day after, they will ask Gerhard Hauptmann to write a script. And it is just so that it will turn out." He scribbled down very quickly a few lines in his tiny notebook.

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I have seen how Mack came to an understanding with the men of business. His tactics were simple and carefully thought over. He didn't listen too much to the objections of the financiers, and when they finished with their arguments, Mack went on talking without a stop. And at regular intervals he repeated with his charming smile: "Gentlemen, I bring you the great sensation." The glaciers melted away.

I asked Mack: "What kind of sensation did you have in mind?"

With a merry twinkle he said: "I did something unusual. Strictly speaking, I opened the eyes. And then I saw the great sensation."

"What did you see?"

"Berlin, quite simply, Berlin. One has to look upon it with a

completely fresh perspective. This great city; this grand, orderly labyrinth of streets, places, bridges and always more and more human beings. Human beings hurrying along, some strolling leisurely. Human beings who stop suddenly and so on. No, this is not a pattern for a romantic picture postcard. If one could only bring these undesigned movements in their vitality and in their perpetual motion into a filmplay!
And that was my sensation! I took my idea straight away to my friend, Franz v. Schontham (the famous playright of comedies), and put it on his desk. This idea of mine took him - so to speak - by storm. Without reluctance and in less than no time, he placed himself at my disposal. And so came into existance the first unusually long German film comedy: 'Where is Coletti?' I must tell you, apart from the magnificent performances of Hans Junkermann and Madge Lessing - the leading actor was Berlin.
The plot was a concoction of very amusing situations. Briefly:
The somewhat adventurous detective Coletti offered a reward of 100.000 marks to anybody who can find him within 48 hours. After disguises, various make-ups, unexpected surprises, and letting people chase after him - a policedog succeeded, but 5 minutes too late. That was all. But behind that stood the Potsdamer Square, the Brandenburger Gate, the Leipziger Street and so on - truly not as a set in the film studio. In the course of many preparations, I got the population warmed up. To enable me to do this I'll always appreciate the help given to me by Mr. Ullstein, the publisher of the daily newspaper 'B.Z.am Mittag.'

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On a cool, sunny autumn afternoon the little newspaper vans went rushing through the streets of Berlin distributing widely, special

editions of the 'B.Z.am Mittag.' Printed on the front pages in large letters - '100.000 marks Reward to be Received by Anyone- who can track down a certain Mr. Coletti (Picture inset) etc. etc. The people in the streets looked at each other and were absolutely lost in amazement. That was just what I needed. At the Potsdamer Square, two cameras were hidden away in lorries, we took pictures of crowds of people who were talking excitedly, and then, suddenly, came running in the greatest possible speed out of the side streets, masses of our film extras, crossing the Potsdamer Square and down the Potsdamer Street, as if there was not a moment to lose. Since it is the habit of a lot of people to be curious, our dear fellow-creatures attached themselves to our running extras and took part in the race. Someone has already seen Mr. Coletti somewhere. They ran after buses, they stopped cars, they rushed everywhere, even into shops and into hotels. And all this and other adventures in the presence of innumerable passers-by, who actually didn't know what it was all about, but enthusiastically followed the others. For a short time, Mr. Coletti flew, disguised as a steward, in an airship (Zeppelin) over Berlin, and one saw from above one or two of these amusing street scenes. In short, the cardinal part was played by the unpaid crowd in the street of Berlin, which in those days, had quite a character of its own. I carried out my promised sensation. My business partner beamed with pleasure at the prospect of raking in the cash. "What originally gave you the idea", I asked Mack, "of making the streets of Berlin the centre of attraction in the story?"
He said: "As a matter of fact, it is quite a nice anecdote, in which my friend, Max Adalbert played a leading part. Adalbert, this wonderful comedian, this irresistable mixture of ready wit, heart and dry humour. It happened in one of my earlier films.

I, myself, played a detective, disguised as a beggar, selling matches in the street. The camera was hidden in a furniture van (in order not to attract attention) and was placed at the famous corner of the Friederich Street and Unter Den Linden. Just then I saw Adalbert with a colleague of his, coming directly towards me. On the spur of the moment I stood in his path and with tears in my eyes I raised my voice: "Please, Mr. Adalbert, buy some matches from a poor man with eight starving children."
Adalbert: (surprised) "How do you know my name?"
Mack: "Everybody knows you. I had a complimentary ticket last night, and I admired you very much."
That did it. He blushed and I saw how he whispered to his colleague, what sounded like vox populi. Then he gave me two marks. "Many thanks, Mr. Adalbert."
Instantaneously I tore off my beard, shook his hand firmly: "Thank you, thank you very much, Maxie, you have just been filmed. It is so rare, that one gets a famous actor to play for nothing."
And then, as quickly as possible, I disappeared in my furniture van: Surely, that was only the idea of a single moment, but the wheel of time took a favourable turn for me. The Film moved nearer and nearer to the Reality of Life, the Life as seen by the Cinema audiences. What mattered first of all was how to produce entertainment for the masses. Nothing more. It was the barrier of the time. However sincere Mack's sense of feeling was for the art, he was still up against a slight mistrust by the poets and writers he tried to engage. He confessed:
"They got on my nerves with their 'psychological arguments.'" The general public will see, just see a simple story, first and foremost, and sometimes they will be taken by surprise.

When once I took a risk to photograph a picture against the sun, it was accepted as a novelty with great interest. The pictures have to be in any case attractive, and that was the whole secret. It was also my ultimate aim, even if it didn't sometimes turn out the way I wanted it..

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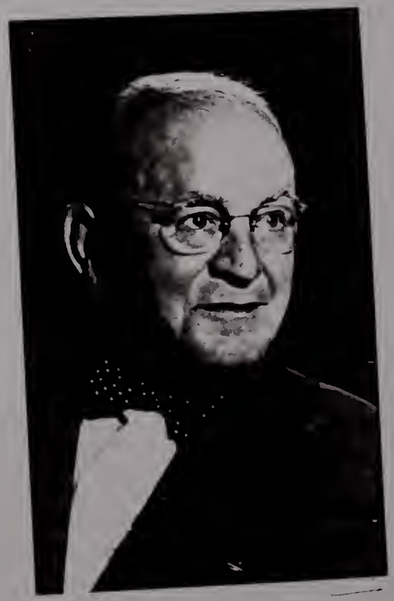
When I talked to Mack shortly before his flight to London, (he was closely persued by the Nazis) he told me:
"I am not discontented. When I started, there were no great actors, no authors, no film-dramatists. I persued Albert Bassermann, I succeeded to engage Franz v. Schonthan, one of the most famous comedy writers of the day, I engaged a prominent writer as a film-dramatist. Artists like Ernst Stern, Paul Leni and Ludwig Kainer have been my architects. A film-director can't always live by his own wits. All the others also have to rack their brains. And so they did.
Mack has known the satisfaction of accomplishing something, on which were centred all his ambitions. He brought about w th his films the positive fact that the Cinema was now treated with respect, as never before. He even 'conquered' the Press, which also helped to make the film the talk of the town. Among the pioneers of the Films, MAX MACK became one of the first rank.

R. K.



London, October 1964

PPB

Pem's Personal Bulletins

- 1405/06 -

~~"Krise - Mao - Klotz" a. der [illegible] - ...dmund g. didn't like Peter Luke's "Hadrian VII" with M. Benrath, Paula Denk and von Meyerinck.~~

Milestones: - Our best wishes and many happy returns to Max Mack who will be 85 on October 21st and celebrate the occasion a day late with a cocktail party. Future film historians will record he directed Ernst Lubitsch acting in 1915 in "Arme Marie" and in "Rober und Bertram", produced the first "author" film "Der Andere" scripted by Paul Lindau starring Albert Bassermann, and the first "talkie", "Ein Tag im Tonfilm-Atelier" not to speak of numerous consumer pictures of which we remember best "Kampf der Tertia" based on Wilhelm Speyer's novel. M.M. is living film history and though he retired rather prematurely from production he enjoys every day, every minute of his happily married life with Anita. - ~~Music publisher Dr. Hans Sikoroski, honorary chairman of "Goma" is seventy in Munich. - Mafalda Salvatini celebrating one of her birthdays~~

PPB

Pem's Personal Bulletins

~~4[illegible] - 1303/4. -~~

~~[illegible]~~ With many happy return wishes from the entire staff of the British Museum where he is a regular guest Max Mack celebrated his 83rd birthday in his best form. ~~Ewie Ponton went to Hamburg to star in a [illegible] - Merlin [illegible] is in Glasgow in a production due in London's West End shortly. - Viktor Skutesky went without any success to Berlin.~~

MAX MACK 85

Though Max Mack, the senior of German film directors, emigrated from Berlin as early as 1933, the motion picture industry has not forgotten his past achievements, and a few years ago he was awarded the golden "Filmband".

Mack started his career as an actor. Alfred Kerr wrote of him: "He looks like Josef Kainz, but acts like Max Mack". Later he turned to directing, and made a short film with Ernst Lubitsch during the First World War. He was the first to induce Albert Bassermann and Paul Lindau to star in and script "Der Andere." This was at a time when both serious actors and authors were refusing to do screen work. His name will forever be linked with the first "Autorenfilm". He was also a pioneer of filming street scenes in Berlin, and he directed the first German sound film, "Ein Tag im Tonfilm Atelier". Best remembered is his "Kampf der Tertia", which was based on one of Wilhelm Speyer's books, and also his film about a Berlin autobus, which he made shortly before leaving the country.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War he attempted to remake "Zwei Waisen im Sturm der Zeit" with Dolly Haas. After this he abandoned the film industry. Perhaps the curtain came down too early on Max Mack, however, he knew when to retire. He can regularly be seen in the Reading Room of the British Museum where he is well known. We wish him a very happy 85th birthday.

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llett 18 (also script), *Meine Frau, die* ...*auspielerin* 18 (also co-scripted), *Der* ...*valier* 18 (also acted), *Die Austern-*...*in* 19 (also co-scripted), *Ich möchte* ...*ann sein* 19 (also script), *Der lustige* ...*n* (only script), *Madame Dubarry* ...*yer aus Berlin* 19 (also acted), *Die* ... 19 (also co-scripted), *Rausch* 19, ...*enädle* 19, *Anna Boleyn* 20, *Kohl-*...*Töchter* 20 (also co-scripted and ... *Medea* 20, *Romeo und Julia im* ... 20 (also co-scripted), *Sumurun* 20 ...-scripted), *Die tolle Rikscha* 20, *Die* ...*tze* 21 (also co-scripted), *Venedetta* ...*s Weib des Pharao* 21, *Die Flamme*

...UDDECKE, WERNER JÖRG ...). B: Hannover. Scriptwriter. At ...uthor, journalist and editor in Kassel ...esden. Soldier, imprisoned, then en-...ema. Writer of scenarios for various ...f films. Solid reputation.

...s: *Das Beil von Wandsbek* (in collab. ...taudte, Hans R. Bortfeldt and Falk ...ck), *Jonny rettet Nehrador* (in collab. ...einz Pauck and Per Schwenzen), *Ge-...is unter vier Augen* (in collab. with ... Maria Kritz and Answald Krüger), ...feuer (in collab.), *Ein Mann vergisst* ...be (in collab. with Madeleine Paul), ... *Juli* (in collab. with Günther Wei-...n), *Nacht der Entscheidung; Nachts ...der Teufel kam; Madeleine und der* ...är (in collab. with Johannes Mario ...l and Emil Burri), *Der Tiger von* ...pur, *Das indische Grabmal, Das To-...iff* (in collab. with Hans Jacoby and ...er), *Herrenpartie.*

...LDERS, GÜNTHER (1915-). ...beck. Actor and director. 1924: stage ...g and *début* in Lübeck. Theatres: ...u, Frankfurt, Berlin (Lessing-Theater, ...die, "Katakombe" and "Tingeltangel" ...ts). 1946-1947: Flensburg, Hamburg, ...k, 1947-1954: General director and ... in Düsseldorf (Städtische Bühnen, ...spielhaus), same position Wuppertal ...-1958), 1959-1960: Bayerisches Staats-...spiel Munich, Renaissance-Theater and ...die Berlin, 1961-1964: General direc-...f the Würtemhergische Staatstheater ...art. Solid reputation as stage director. In films often featured as a servant or joker. Directed certain films *.

Films: *Die Insel, Herz ist Trumpf, Fürst Woronzeff; Ein Kind, ein Hund, ein Vagabund; Fräulein Liselott, Lärm um Wedemann. Die törichte Jungfrau, Spiel an Bord, Autobus S, Alarm in Peking, Meine Frau, die Perle, Florentine, Der Etappenhase, Die Kreutzersonate, Schwarzfahrt im Glück, Das Ehesanatorium, Muskeln Meier III, Ein Mädchen geht an Land, Nanu, Sie kennen Korff noch nicht?, Männer müssen so sein, Hochzeitsreise zu Dritt, In letzter Minute, Schneider Wibbel, Mein Mann darf es nicht wissen, Rote Mühle, Alles Schwindel, Casanova heiratet, Wunschkonzert, Herzensfreud – Herzensleid, Sechs Tage Heimaturlaub, Am Abend auf der Heide, Frau Luna, Elle man Ehemann wird, Hab' mich lieb, Geheimakte W 1, Weisse Wäsche, Ein Mann für meine Frau, Ein Walzer mit Dir, Leichtes Blut, Floh im Ohr, Ein schöner Tag, Fritze Bollmann wollte angeln, Neigungsehe, Grossmann wollte angeln, Neigungsehe, Grossmann Freiheit Nr. 7, Meine Herren Söhne, Verlobte Leute, Wir seh'n uns wieder, Tierische Liebe, Frau über Bord, Die Zeit mit Dir, Tobias Knopp, Abenteuer eines Junggesellen* (speaker), *Kommen Sie am Ersten, Der Tag vor der Hochzeit, Der Mann in der Wanne, Vater braucht eine Frau, Skandal im Mädchenpensionat, Ein Herz spielt falsch, Keine Angst vor grossen Tieren, Musik bei Nacht, Muss man sich gleich scheiden lassen?, Der Vogelhändler, Königliche Hoheit, Das ideale Brautpaar, . . . und ewig bleibt die Liebe, Heideschulmeister Uwe Karsten, Das sündige Dorf, Der tolle Adam, Vatertag, Drei Männer im Schnee, Das fröhliche Dorf, Rosen im Herbst, Der Frontgockel, Hilfe – sie liebt mich, Lumpazivagabundus, Das Sonntagskind, Manöverball, Ciske – Ein Kind braucht Liebe, Wenn wir alle Engel wären, 56, Rot ist die Liebe, Robinson soll nicht sterben, Alle Wege führen heim, Das Wirtshaus im Spessart, Kein Auskommen mit dem Einkommen, Vater unser bestes Stück, 57, Lilli – Ein Mädchen aus der Grosstadt, Hoppla – jetzt kommt Eddie, 13 kleine Esel und der Sonnenhof, Auferstehung, Ihr 106, Geburtstag* 58, *Buddenbrooks, Liebe auf krummen Beinen, Bobby Todd erobert ein, Kriminaltango, Mal drunter – mal drüber, Tonio Kröger, Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame.*

230 MACK, MAX (1884-). B: Halberstadt. Director. Started in 1906 as an actor in provincial theatres, then began to write film scripts for film companies in Berlin. Thanks to Julius Greenbaum he was engaged at the Vitascop. He said, "I wrote, arranged and acted the main parts in several short films." At the same time, he was also his own production manager. He claims to have introduced close-ups into German films. In *Wo ist Coletti?*, he is one of the first to use a hidden camera. Founder of the *auteur* film in Germany with *Der Andere* by Lindau, for which he engaged Albert Bassermann (q.v.). Max Mack, one of the forgotten pioneers of the German cinema, had to emigrate to London after the seizure of power by the Nazis. There he shot two more films, *Be Careful, Mr. Smith* and *Mack's Comedies*. In 1916 he wrote (among others with E. A. Dupont, q.v.) the film book, *Die zappelnde Leinwand*, published in London in 1943 as *With a Sigh and a Smile.*

Films: *Der Mutter Augen* (also script and acted), *Der Diener ihres Freundes* (also script and acted), *Die Falle* (also script and acted), *Die Frau des Abgeordneten* (also script and acted), *Launen des Schicksals* (also script and acted), *Mahira, Opfer um Opfer, Wenn die Toten erwachen* (also script and acted) – (dates for these films unobtainable, but all were made certainly prior to 1923). Films (incomplete): *Die blonde Maus* 12 (also script), *Der Andere* 13, *Der König* 13, *Der letzte Tag* 13, *Wo ist Coletti?* 13, *Anne Marie* 14, *Der Kaufmann* 15, *Robert und Bertram* 15, *Othello* 18, *Sein Weib* 18, *Freie Liebe* 19 (prod., also scripted with Adolf Lantz), *Lehen die Toten?* 19 (also prod.), *Figaros Hochzeit* 20 (also script), *Die Lieblingsfrau des Maharadscha* 20, *Geheimnisse von Berlin* 21, *Das Frauenparadies* 22, *O du mein Vaterland* 22 (also scripted with Overway), *Das schöne Mädel* 22, *Die Tragödie im Hause Habsburg* 22, *Die Fledermaus* 23, *Quarantäne* 23, *Das Mädchen mit der Protektion* 25, *Der ungebetene Gust* 25, *Vater Voss* 25, *Die Fahrt ins Abenteuer* 26, *Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland* 27, *Steh' ich in finsterer Mitternacht* 27, *Ein Tag der Rosen im August . . . da hat die Garde fortgemusst* 27, *Der Kampf der Tertia* 28 (also co-scripted), *Autobus Nr. 2* 29. Then sound: *Nur am Rhein* 30 (also co-scripted with Jacques Bacherach), *Tausend für eine Nacht* 32.

231 MACKEBEN, THEO (1897-1953). B: Preussich-Stargard. D: Berlin. Composer. Private music training. Appeared as pianist at the age of fifteen. Composed mainly for light entertainments and operettas. With the coming of sound he started to write for films, and he was appreciated for his effective songs and even symphonic scores. He adapted several musical works for the cinema with great charm.

Films: *Die Jagd nach dem Glück, Ich geh' aus und Du bleibst da* (in collab.), *Die Dreigroschenoper* (in collab. with Kurt Weill), *Die verkaufte Braut, Wie sag ich's meinem Mann, Das Abenteuer der Thea Roland, Fünf von der Jazzband, Ein steinreicher Mann, Liebelei, Pechmarie, Die Finanzen des Grossherzogs; Liebe, Tod und Teufel; Pygmalion, Viktoria, Das Einmaleins der Liebe, Mach' mich glücklich, Der Student von Prag* (35), *Mädchen in*

Filmpionier Max Mack, wie er heute aussieht. Seit 1933 lebt der nun 73jährige Künstler, dessen Wiege in Halberstadt stand, in London. Mack, einem der geistigen Väter des „Autorenfilms" in Deutschland, kommt unter anderem das Verdienst zu, den eingeschworenen Filmgegner Albert Bassermann 1913 (in „Der Andere") für die flimmernde Leinwand gewonnen zu haben. Fotos: Privat

Max Mack - einer der Wegbereiter des Films

Erinnern Sie sich noch?

Erinnern Sie sich noch?

Berlin, die Wiege des deutschen Films, bereitet augenblicklich eine Ausstellung vor, die den frühen Anfängen der Kinematographie und ihren Pionieren gewidmet sein soll. Einer der großen, wegweisenden Männer jener filmischen „Gründerjahre" ist der heute in London lebende Max Mack, einer der namhaftesten Regisseure vor dem ersten Weltkrieg. Lesen Sie, was Max Mack der FILM-REVUE kürzlich von der guten alten Zeit erzählte.

Der freundliche, ältere Herr, dem man häufig im Lesesaal des Britischen Museums und auf seinen langen Wanderungen durch Londons Bloomsbury-Viertel begegnet, ist der heute 73jährige Max Mack, gebürtiger Halberstädter.

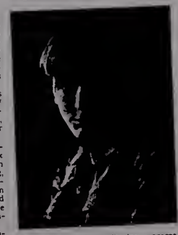
Erinnern Sie sich noch, als die Filmkunst in den Kinderschuhen steckte? Erinnern Sie sich noch an Paul Lindaus ersten deutschen Star- und Autorenfilm „Der Andere", in dem der bis dahin eingefleischte Filmgegner Albert Bassermann debütierte? Der Regisseur dieses Films war Max Mack.

Heute bedeutet das gar nichts mehr. Damals bedeutete es alles! Denn damals wurde einer für verrückt erklärt, der es wagte, Romane, Bühnenstücke oder Erzählungen zur Verfilmung zu mißbrauchen.

Ebenso imposant wie seine Filmlaufbahn war die Karriere Max Macks als Schauspieler. Als er noch durch die deutschen Provinzen zog, spielte er den Moritz Stiefel in Wedekinds „Frühlings Erwachen". In Breslau, Hamburg, Düsseldorf und an der Berliner Freien Volksbühne war er ein ausgezeichneter Amandus in Halbes „Jugend".

Als ich letzte Woche mit dem immer noch vitalen Künstler in der „Museum Tavern" gegenüber dem Britischen Museum saß, waren seine Gedanken wieder bei jener Zeit: „Im Café Westminster unter den Linden trafen sich jeden Nachmittag die stellungslosen Schauspieler und warteten auf Filmagenten und Hilfsregisseure, um für einen oder zwei Tage in einem Filmstudio für fünf, sechs oder sogar sieben Mark engagiert zu werden."

Der alte Herr nahm bedächtig



Max Mack war zu Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts ein bekannter Bühnenschauspieler. Diesen Fotos zeigt ihn als Amandus in Max Halbes „Jugend". Alfred Kerr schrieb seinerzeit im „Berliner Tageblatt": „Max Mack spielt den Amandus, sieht aus wie Josef Kainz — und spielt ihn wie Max Mack."

einen Schluck vom kräftigen Starkbier und fuhr fort: „Um mehr zu verdienen und bekannter zu werden, schrieb ich Filmideen, für die ich zehn bis fünfundzwanzig Mark erhielt. In jedem Drehbuch fügte ich eine Rolle für mich selbst bei, um wieder für ein oder zwei Tage beschäftigt zu sein."

Seine kleine Zigarre wanderte aus einem Mundwinkel in den anderen. „Dann kam eines Tages auch der Wendepunkt für mich, der für meine spätere Tätigkeit als Filmregisseur von Bedeutung wurde. Ich schrieb für den damals populären Filmregisseur Viggor Larsen und seinen Filmstar Wanda Treumann ein Drehbuch: ‚Die Frau des Abgeordneten'. Ich erhielt fünfundzwanzig Mark für die Arbeit und sechzehn Mark für zwei Tage im Atelier. Einundvierzig Mark — ein Vermögen!"

Geburt der Großaufnahme

Mack wiegte seinen Kopf hin und her, bevor er weitererzählte. „Ich wurde von der ‚Mutoscope'-Filmgesellschaft verpflichtet, doch Jules Greenbaum, der mich bereits im ‚Vitascope'-Atelier beobachtet hatte, schnappte mich der ‚Mutoscope' mit einem Jahresvertrag weg. Und nun führte ich als einer der ersten in Deutschland die Großaufnahmen im Film ein. Da ich selbst die Hauptrolle spielte, konnten die Aufnahmen natürlich gar nicht groß genug sein!"

Wir lachten herzlich. „Jeden Monat inszenierte ich zwei Filme. Das erste abendfüllende Lustspiel ‚Der Andere', brach mit der Tradition des Einakters und wurde bei der Premiere 1913 ein großer Erfolg. Auch ‚Wo ist Colett?' und ‚Die blaue Maus' (beide 1912) gehörten zu den ersten Publikumserfolgen. Das Lustspiel ‚Die blaue Maus' wurde seinerzeit von allen Theaterbesitzern Deutschlands abgelehnt. Aber Jules Greenbaum und ich waren überzeugt, daß wir einen Clou in Händen hatten. Kurzentschlossen mieteten wir uns selbst das neueröffnete Marmorhaus am Kurfürstendamm, machten eine riesige Propaganda nach amerikanischem Muster, ließen zwanzig Möbelwagen mit bunten Plakaten eine ganze Woche lang durch die Straßen Berlins fahren, und der Film, der als dumm und langweilig abgelehnt worden war, lief nicht weniger als drei Monate dreimal täglich vor ausverkauftem Haus. Das war für jene Zeit eine ganz große Neuheit!"

Keinen seiner Filme hat Max Mack vergessen, er kann sie noch alle aufzählen: „Der Mutter Augen", „Der Katzensteg" von Sudermann, „Die Lieblingsfrau des Maharadscha", „Figaros Hochzeit" mit Alexander Moissi — und „Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland"

Das Abschiedsgeschenk

Plötzlich veränderte sich Max Macks Gesicht. Die wehmütige Erinnerung an seine alte Heimat, die er 1933 verlassen mußte, bewegte ihn offensichtlich, als er sagte: „Meine Inszenierung ‚Der Kampf der Tertia' (1928) war der letzte Film, den ich vor meiner Übersiedlung nach Prag und im gleichen Jahr noch nach London für die damalige junge Generation als Abschiedsgeschenk hinterließ."

Lange bringt er kein Wort heraus. Dann unterbricht er das schier endlose Schweigen: „Den Triumph, den ich auf literarischem Gebiet und durch Publikumserfolge davontrug, machte meinen Namen in der internationalen Filmwelt für alle Zeiten zu einem festen Begriff."

„With a Sigh and a Smile" (Mit einem Seufzer und einem Lächeln) heißt das Buch seiner „Erinnerungen". Der Untertitel lautet: „A showman looks back" (Ein Filmmann sieht zurück) und keiner hat wohl mehr ein Anrecht darauf als er, einer der großen Pioniere der deutschen Filmkunst.

Sylvia von Harden

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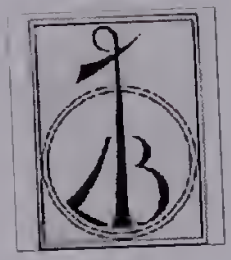

End of Max Mack Collection